

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 099 026

JC 740 467

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TITLE A Comparison of Academic Achievement and Student Involvement in Extracurricular Activity.
INSTITUTION Nova Univ., Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
PUB DATE 22 Nov 74
NOTE 21p.; Practicum submitted to Nova University in partial fulfillment of requirements for Doctor of Education degree

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.75 HC-\$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; *Cocurricular Activities; Colleges; *College Students; *Correlation; *Grade Point Average; Higher Education; Hypothesis Testing; Junior Colleges; Post Secondary Education; Practicums; Predictor Variables; Questionnaires; Statistical Analysis; Tables (Data)

IDENTIFIERS Pennsylvania; *York College

ABSTRACT

To test the hypothesis that there is no significant correlation between academic achievement and the degree of extracurricular involvement, a study was made of 200 randomly selected students at York College of Pennsylvania. The 200 students were sent a questionnaire designed to elicit the extent of their extracurricular involvement; 65 percent returned the questionnaire. To express the relation between the two variables, hours of extracurricular involvement (activities not directly related to the academic program) were plotted against grade point average. Analysis of the data clearly showed that there was no significant correlation between extracurricular involvement and academic achievement. A residual finding was that there was no appreciable difference in correlation between the resident and commuting populations. (Nine tables provide the study data. In addition, a lengthy bibliography and a copy of the survey form are included.) (DB)

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TITLE OF RESEARCH PRACTICUM

A Comparison Of Academic Achievement And Student
Involvement In Extracurricular Activity

by

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York College of Pennsylvania

A RESEARCH PRACTICUM PRESENTED TO NOVA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

NOVA UNIVERSITY

November 22, 1974

JC 740 467

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1. Title

The research proposal is entitled, "A Comparison Of Academic Achievement And Student Involvement In Extracurricular Activity."

2. Statement of Problem

The problem asks the question, "To what degree does extracurricular involvement correlate with academic achievement?"

3. Hypothesis

The hypothesis postulates that there is no significant correlation between academic achievement and the degree of extracurricular involvement.

4. Background and Significance of Study

The current trend across the land is for development of college governance structures that allow for greater participation relative to faculty and students (Richardson 1972). One question that arises is to what degree will the increase demand on available student time effect his academic performance (Mash 1973).

It is certainly true that a major concern of higher education is the development of the total student. Yet, it cannot be overlooked that the prime objective of formal education is the intellectual development of the student, which still remains central to the classroom.

There has been considerable discussion concerning the merits of participatory college governance but very little hard data to either support or reject its implications.

As early as 1968 student participation in college governance began to be a central issue. Joseph Kauffman (1968) presented a paper at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities entitled, "The Role of the Student." Kauffman urged that all members of the college community ought to have a voice in institutional governance, but he was uncertain as to how much voice and in what areas. It was his feeling that the best way to reconcile governance confusion was to work to improve respect among the constituent member of the campus community and in addition make a special effort to give students a sense of worth as community members.

Ralph Berdie (1969) in an article entitled, "A Note on the Governance of Universities," stated that administrations should not be sources of power, but avenues through which power of other groups can be channeled and resolved. It was his feeling that people wish to plan their own destinies, especially concerning the issues which effect them. He called for college administrations to lead faculty and students in a manner in which their power could be expressed. He had no specific model to present, but advocated faith in what he termed the "democratic dynamics of power."

Howard R. Bowen (1969) in an article entitled, "Governance and Educational Reform," came up with what he considered to be an effective plan for college governance. He envisioned a joint council representing faculty, students, administrators, and non-academic staff. To get things done he felt the president would actually make and be responsible for the major decisions but he would depend upon the advise of the joint council. The function of the joint council would be to review and recommend concerning the entire range of academic and non-academic policy.

An extremely interesting article published in the AAUP Bulletin by T. Hoult (1969) entitled, "On Keeping Our Cool in the Halls of Ivy," presents a slightly reactionary point of view. He calls for wisdom in regard to college governance. He feels that colleges must be controlled by the most knowledgeable members of the community. From his perspective, he means control by faculty and administration. He does not rule out the possibility of student input on all issues, but clearly feels that students because of transitory interests and limited time should control only their private lives, social activities, and the student newspaper.

Theodore J. Marchese (1969) in an article entitled, "Student Participation in Plans is no Longer a Question of Whether, but How," advocates that students must be in on the decision-making process from start to finish. He believes that as many students as possible should be involved and they should be more than simply observers. It is his belief that student involvement would not only provide new ideas and broaden the planning base, but that it contributes significantly to student growth.

An article that agrees with Marchese and challenges Hoult's position was written by May A. Brunson (1969) entitled, "Student Involvement in University Governance: Sense or Nonsense?" Ms. Brunson feels strongly that students have a rightful place in college governance. She believes that governance is a learning in leadership experience and that young people learn when their responsibilities are increased. She admits that students are not legally responsible for an institution, but feels that new structures can be created to pool the ideas of administrators, faculty and students. In regard to the challenge of transience, she claims that students are hardly more transient than today's faculty.

A rather novel approach to college governance was presented by Harold L. Hodgkinson (1970) in an article entitled, "Ideal Governance Structure Would Be Larger and Smaller-Simultaneously." He suggests that the heart of the problem is size. He states that a negative relationship exists between group size and individual participation and satisfaction. His ideal governance structure would have the smallest possible groups making decisions effecting an individuals life and commitments, and the largest groups possible to make decisions regarding logistics and support services. He further advocates that colleges consider the model of a California Junior College that governs through ad hoc committees composed of only persons concerned about the problem at hand.

Earl J. McGrath (1970) in an article entitled, "The Student's Role in Academic Government," sites the pros and cons. Among the reasons listed for greater student involvement in governance are: This generation of socially aware students are well qualified to participate in decision and policy making; it is an excellent learning situation; students have a great stake in correcting curriculum deficiencies and they are in a good position to judge classroom and learning experiences.

Critics fear a shift of institutional power into the hands of undergraduates; that students do not have sufficient maturity to handle such responsibility; that students are transient and therefore will not focus on long-range policies; and that involvement would simply require more time than most students could afford to give.

Lewis B. Mayhow (1970) in an article entitled, "Students in Governance--A Minority View," expands on the criticisms proposed by McGrath. He states that for a complexity of factors students cannot have a central role in governance.

He said that basically public disenchantment with higher education has resulted in limited resources and therefore the luxury of uninformed student policy-making cannot be afforded. He points out that state systems have assumed powers formally held by presidents and they (the State) are impervious to student influence or even opposed to it. He reminded the reader that the necessity of long-range planning has decreased administrative flexibility to student demands and the trend is not likely to change. He suggests that the tighter job market has threatened faculty and encouraged unionism and unionism will not provide for viable student involvement in its negotiations. Finally, it is his opinion that students have not demonstrated a capability in dealing with critical decisions relative to institutional life.

T. R. McConnell (1971) in an article entitled, "The Redistribution of Power in Higher Education: Changing Patterns of Internal Governance," states that authority, power and influence in higher education are and will continue to be in flux, both internally and externally. It is his feeling that faculty unionism will render academic senates impotent and doom any system of governance by joint responsibility and shared authority. He believes that adversary collective bargaining may replace rational debate and concern for excellence may be lost. He sees the role of the student in all of this as unclear, but suggests that they may one day hold a balance of power by forming an alliance with administrators.

Donald J. Mash (1972) in an article entitled, "Participation in Campus Governance: A Stimulant or Depressant?" makes the rather startling claim that although participatory decision-making has led to quieter campuses, it has not led to more effective governance. He feels that students have been pushed into high level campus government before they even had control over

their personal life styles. Participating students, as well as faculty, often have acted as representatives for their group and the consensus frequently has become an exhibition of axe-grinding. He feels that the real need is not for participatory governance which requires time commitments that neither students nor faculty can afford, but administrative accountability and enhanced communication.

Harold Hodgkinson (1973) reviewed the progress of participatory governance in an article entitled, "Broadly-Based Senates: A First Report." His investigation discovered that of the 221 institutions that tried the idea but later rejected it, the demise of 40 was the result of unionization: some small institutions rejected the idea because it was too complex; some large institutions rejected the idea because the senates swallowed too cumbersome proportions; at institutions where communication was good the need was not pressing and thus they turned in the direction of informal advisory groups.

E. deJonghe (1972) in an article entitled, "Problems of Student Participation," feels that the greatest stumbling block to participatory governance is sufficient common agreement on educational goals. Coupled with this is an, in general, lack of trust and mutual confidence. Although deJonghe sees broad governance participation as a valuable technique, he believes that without common agreement as to the ends of the institution, it will become a source of permanent and growing irritation for all concerned.

Digby Jacks (1973) in a paper entitled, "Student Representation," presented what he considered to be the three existing options in regard to student participation in college governance. One would be the trade union approach; or recast college governance on the basis of one-man one-vote (students would control the institutions); or extend student representation by democratizing the governance structure.

It was apparent from a review of the literature relative to student participation in college governance that there were myriad perspectives, a wide range of opinion, a few alternatives, but very little hard data generated by research. This survey investigated a single question which focused on the variable of time. It simply asked what effect student involvement in extra-curricular activities has on academic achievement.

The objectives of the research project were modest, however, the survey could lead to further study. Because no significant correlation was discovered to exist between extracurricular involvement and academic achievement the choice of governance model, or for that matter any extracurricular activity, one need not be overly concerned as to detrimental academic effects.

The implications for generalization of the research findings beyond York College are likely. Although the primary focus of the research was from the York perspective, a lack of significant correlation between the variables should be of more than passing interest to all educators concerned as to academic effect relative to extracurricular involvement.

5. Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for the purpose of the study.

a) Extracurricular Involvement - The time (hours) devoted to activities not directly related to the academic program. (For the purpose of the survey, hours designated work and athletic involvement were included.)

b) Expectancy Table - In order to express the relation between the two variables, hours of extracurricular involvement was plotted against grade point average to determine the probability outcome.

c) Academic Achievement - Grade Point Average computed by dividing the summation of weighted course credit by the sum of course credit where A is equal to 4; B equal to 3; C equal to 2; D equal to 1; and, F equal to 0.

Example:

<u>Course</u>		<u>Grade</u>		
<u>Credit</u>		<u>Weight</u>		
3	x	2 (C)	=	6
6	x	3 (B)	=	<u>18</u>
				24
24	÷	9	=	2.6 Grade Point Average

- d) Independent Variable - Extracurricular involvement
- e) Dependent Variable - Academic achievement (Grade Point Average)
- f) Control Variables - Sex, intelligence, marital status, class status and residence (stratified random sample).
- g) Intervening Variables - Motivation, energy, values, special abilities, and health (perhaps some of these were partially controlled through random selection).

6. Limitations of Study

- a) The relatively small sample (130) and the peculiarities of the community will certainly limit the generalization of results.
- b) The intervening variables and basic assumptions will obviously influence and limit the accuracy and validity of the study.
- c) The effectiveness of the questionnaire to elicit accurate information in regard to hours of extracurricular involvement is a very definite limitation.

7. Basic Assumptions

- a) It is assumed that students through a carefully designed questionnaire can and will accurately report their extracurricular involvement.
- b) Another assumption is the notion that academic achievement can be realistically measured. There are grades, and course credit, and formulas, but one has to wonder about the accuracy of such things.

c) It is assumed that the limitations of the study that were cited earlier in the proposal will not adversely effect the results.

d) It is further assumed that if a research project is carefully designed and meticulously executed that the results will tell something worth knowing.

8. Procedures for Collecting Data

a) The study used current York College enrollment rosters to identify a stratified random sample of approximately 200.

b) The 200 students were sent a questionnaire designed to elicit the extent of their extracurricular involvement. (Sample questionnaire is included in the appendix.) A 65% questionnaire return was achieved.

c) The study compared extracurricular involvement with academic achievement in an effort to determine relationship.

d) All the information needed for the study was located in the College Records Office or was gathered through the questionnaire.

9. Procedures for Treating Data

The following was the procedure for treating the data:

a) Null Hypothesis: $H_0: P = 0$

b) Alternate Hypothesis: $H_a: P \neq 0$

c) Level of Significance: $\alpha = .05$

d) Critical r Value: $\pm .1161$ (Non-directional test)

H_0 will be rejected and H_a accepted if

$r > + .1161$ or $< - .1161$

10. Data Resulting from the Study

The following is the data that resulted from the study:

Table I

<u>Critical r Value</u>	<u>Calculated r Value</u>
$\pm .1161$	- .021

Table I records the critical value of r and the calculated value of r. The null hypothesis cannot be rejected. There is no significant correlation between extracurricular involvement and academic achievement.

11. Conclusions and Significance

a) The data clearly indicates no significant correlation between extracurricular involvement and academic achievement.

b) Implications for York College:

1) If the college chooses to develop a committee or governance structure that would involve a significant increased demand on student time, the research suggests that there would probably be no detrimental effect on student academic performance.

c) Implications for a generalization of the research findings beyond York College:

1) It should be of interest to educators, that extracurricular involvement regardless of its nature, (work, athletics, clubs or whatever) seems to have no effect on academic achievement. In fact, although no significant correlation was discovered, the correlation that existed was consistently indicating a negative relationship. It would seem that as students become more greatly involved in extracurricular activity they tend to achieve better academically. (Of course, since the correlation was not significant this tendency could have occurred simply by chance.)

12. Residual Findings

The following data is incidental to the research, but perhaps of interest.

- a) No appreciable difference in correlation was discovered to exist between the resident and commuting populations. (- .05 Commuters, - .08 Residents)
- b) Although the correlation between resident and commuting students was not significant, it may be of interest to know the average weekly time distribution of a resident student.

Table I
(Athletics)

<u>Hours Involved</u>	<u>Number Involved</u>	<u>Percentage Involved</u>
0 - 4	75	84
5 - 9	2	2
10 - 14	8	9
15 - 19	1	1
20 - above	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
	89	100

Table II
(Sleep)

<u>Hours Involved</u>	<u>Number Involved</u>	<u>Percentage Involved</u>
below - 39	6	6
40 - 49	22	25
50 - 59	40	45
60 - 69	18	20
70 - above	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
	89	100

Table III
(Class Hours)

<u>Hours Involved</u>	<u>Number Involved</u>	<u>Percentage Involved</u>
below - 15	23	26
16	8	9
17	16	18
18	12	13
19 - above	<u>30</u>	<u>34</u>
	89	100

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Table IV
(Study)

<u>Hours Involved</u>	<u>Number Involved</u>	<u>Percentage Involved</u>
0 - 9	1	1
10 - 19	21	24
20 - 29	33	37
30 - 39	23	26
40 - above	<u>11</u>	<u>13</u>
	89	100

Table V
(Extracurricular)

<u>Hours Involved</u>	<u>Number Involved</u>	<u>Percentage Involved</u>
0 - 9	33	37
10 - 19	27	30
20 - 29	15	17
30 - 39	12	14
40 - above	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
	89	100

Table VI
(Job)

<u>Hours Involved</u>	<u>Number Involved</u>	<u>Percentage Involved</u>
0 - 9	56	63
10 - 19	25	28
20 - 29	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>
	89	100

Table VII
(Leisure)

<u>Hours Involved</u>	<u>Number Involved</u>	<u>Percentage Involved</u>
10 - 19	10	11
20 - 29	23	26
30 - 39	30	34
40 - 49	18	20
50 - above	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>
	89	100

Table VIII
(Average Week-Resident Student)

<u>Categories</u>	<u>Average Hours Involved</u>	<u>Percentage of Time Involved</u>
Athletics	4	2
Sleep	53	31
Classes	17	10
Study	27	16
Extracurricular	16	9
Job	13	7
Leisure	34	20
Miscellaneous	8	5
	<u>172</u>	<u>100</u>

Discussion

The time distribution of the commuting student was essentially the same as the resident, therefore, no effort has been made to report the differences. Also, since the tables appear self-explanatory no effort is made to interpret them.

Table IX
(Probability Outcome)

<u>Hours of Involvement</u>	<u>No. of Cases</u>	<u>Percentage Receiving Criterion Cumulative Average</u>		
		<u>10-1.99</u>	<u>20-2.99</u>	<u>30-3.99</u>
0 - 9	47	17	60	23
10 - 19	35	12	71	17
20 - 29	29	14	51	35
30 - 39	15	20	66	14
40 - above	4	50	50	

13. Further Studies

Since the study discovered no significant correlation between extra-curricular involvement and academic achievement, it is probably not necessary to repeat the study. However, simply because no correlation was found, between the variables, relative to groups, does not mean that there may not exist a correlation in regard to the individual. One observation crystalized

by the study is that students tend to seek their own level of involvement (which probably explains the lack of correlation). If a student experiences academic difficulty relative to his expectation, he simply backs off from burdensome involvement. A worthwhile study would be an investigation of the effect on individual academic performance as extracurricular involvement increases. A study of this design would be especially interesting as it applies to those of low academic ability.

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INFORMATION

SURVEY

The Student Affairs Division is conducting a survey designed to determine the relationship between student involvement in extracurricular activity and academic achievement. It would be both helpful and appreciated if you provide the following information.

What we would like you to do is break down your week into eight time involvement categories. The hours can be estimates and the breakdown based upon an average week. The only category that probably needs explanation is the one labeled extracurricular involvement. This category should include all the hours you spend involved in college related activities that are not directly related to your academic program. Examples of this kind of commitment would be clubs, organizations, committees, etc. Your weekly time commitment should total 168 hours.

NAME	(PRINT)	Last	First	Middle
_____	Athletics (Intercollegiate)			
_____	Sleep			
_____	Class Hours			
_____	Study			
_____	Extracurricular Involvement			
_____	Work (Job)			
_____	Leisure			
_____	Misc. (Meals, travel, etc.)			
_____	168 Total			

Comments: _____

Thank you.

Richard W. Call
 Dean of Student Affairs